

for our country, May 18 marks an incredible landmark in time for people in the Northwest and certainly marks a critical response by our Federal Government. It also allows us to reflect on the progress we have made as a nation to develop a greater understanding about the more than 160 active volcanoes in the United States.

For over 100 years, Mount St. Helens stood in silence, a relatively dormant peak and serene part of the Pacific Northwest. But on the morning of May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens erupted releasing a plume of ash that filled the sky, circling the Earth in just 15 days. The destructive eruption eviscerated everything in its path and tore through miles of trees.

Today, 25 years later, the effect of the 1980 eruption remains evident, and the rumbling of Mount St. Helens over the past several months reminds many of us, particularly in Washington State, of those events on May 18, 1980. The level of activity of Mount St. Helens, combined with the unpredictability of it, makes it very special for Washingtonians. We embrace the mountain's beauty but remain in profound respect of its power and weary of a repeat eruption similar to 1980.

What is important to understand is that Mount St. Helens, located 90 miles south of Seattle and 65 miles north of Portland, OR, when it exploded, released such hot steam that it actually melted 70 percent of the snow and ice on top of the mountain. To give you a sense of that enormity, Mount St. Helens was, prior to this, the ninth highest peak in the State of Washington. It has now been reduced about 1,300 feet. The avalanche that was created by that explosion was close to two-thirds of a cubic mile of debris. The Geological Survey estimates that would be enough to cover Washington, DC, in more than 14 feet of ash and mud. That is basically what the Northwest dealt with when this explosion happened in 1980. We saw flows of rock and ice covering various parts of the north fork of the Toutle River, debris running down those pathways wherever it could go. The eruption destroyed 27 bridges that were part of our highway structure, 200 hundred homes, 185 miles of roadway, and 15 miles of railway.

What is unique about this is that Congress responded. We responded because of the devastation to the physical and environmental infrastructure but also because of the loss of life. My colleague and I are here to commemorate those 57 Washingtonians who died in the incident, and one particular individual, David Johnston, who was with the U.S. Geological Survey. What this anniversary marks is the great strides we've made as a Nation to respond to science in this area.

David Johnston, by comparison, in 1980 had been studying Mount St. Helens for many months. In fact, on the morning of the explosion, he was 6 miles away on what is now called Johnston Ridge. Many of my colleagues

may, if they turned on the TV in the last several months to see rumblings of Mount St. Helens, seen many observers, and many members of the media stationed on Johnston Ridge. When Mount St. Helens erupted on that day, David Johnston, who was our monitoring system at Mount St. Helens only had an opportunity to say: Vancouver, this is it. And the eruption took his life.

Where we are today is that we have volcanologists, geologists, seismologists in what is a robust system of emergency response. The U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Interior, the National Guard and Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Department of Homeland Security, and the Cascade Volcanic Observatory in Vancouver, WA, all provide us with a much greater sense of what is going on with Mount St. Helens and what the emergency response should be in the event of a similar explosion.

My colleague mentioned that we have seen a lot of rumblings lately on Mount St. Helens, and certainly those eruptions have caused concern. But I think today's anniversary reminds us that as a nation we responded to this activity with a better warning system, and with a much better understanding of volcanic activity in the United States. With the 162 active volcanoes in the United States, we in the Northwest want to see good research on this. The fact that Mt. Rainier and other mountains are much closer to great population centers of Washington State is something for which we want to continue to have an investment in good science.

I join my colleague Senator MURRAY and thank her for commemorating the events of May 18, 1980, as a particular point in time for Washingtonians and for our country. But as I stated this commemoration is also significant because it speaks to the advancements in science that our country has achieved in better preparing to respond to this type of emergency. When I think about the science we have applied as it relates to volcano monitoring, I am confident that with similar activity and research as it relates to tsunami activity—something that also could greatly impact the Northwest—we can better prepare for an event of that nature as well. It gives me a great deal of hope that we will, through better mapping, through better geological information, better seismic information, provide Washingtonians with greater security and safety.

As most of my State will be seeing many pictures of the eruption in 1980, I thank my colleagues from past Congresses for their support in giving us a Cascade Volcanic Observatory in the State of Washington and for the work the men and women do in various Federal agencies that provide us better scientific information and a better warning systems for our country.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to comment on the surface transportation act we are going to hopefully pass today and a particular provision that I was happy to work on with my colleagues Senators INOUE, STEVENS, AND LOTT, regarding giving consumers better protection and accurate information about gasoline consumption. Americans today are facing a painful reality at the gas pump, so the least we can do is to make sure the mileage stickers on their cars match up with the reality of the road. That will help them and their families make better budget plans and make better choices when buying automobiles.

It is simply that we need to have truth in labeling for stickers on automobiles. But today gas mileage stickers that appear on cars basically inflate the true vehicle fuel economy performance by anywhere from 10 to 30 percent.

That is because the Federal Government laboratory tests, on which this outdated procedures rely, are false assumptions. For example, they assume people drive 48 miles per hour on the freeway, and they never use air conditioning. Obviously, a variety of other things that represent technology improvements have not been considered in this test. When a family is on a tight budget—and right now there are many Americans on a tight budget—getting accurate information about vehicle fuel efficiency is important.

The provisions of this bill that are included in the surface transportation act would direct EPA to issue a proposed rulemaking no later than the end of this year and complete the process within 18 months. What it would do is encourage the Government to take into account real-life conditions such as speed limits, acceleration rates, braking, variations of weather and temperature, vehicle load, and a variety of other fuel-consuming features.

It is important that we pass this kind of legislation. I know the American Automobile Association supports this legislation, as do many other residents throughout the country who are consumers making gas-conscious choices when they buy automobiles. We need to give them accurate information.

I am glad the truth in labeling amendment we offered will be included as part of the package of the surface transportation act and hopefully pass today.

I yield the floor.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Senate SAFETEA bill that is before us, the Transportation bill. I first want to thank my colleague from Washington State for her leadership on so many different issues, including provisions in the Transportation bill. I thank Senators INHOFE and JEFFORDS for drafting

a good bill for the country and a good bill for Michigan.

I am pleased the Senate is passing this critical bill today. Unfortunately, this has been delayed for over 20 months and Congress has passed six TEA-21 extensions. It is my hope that we will not have to pass a seventh and this bill will be completed before the end of the month. We have already lost one spring construction season in Michigan, and we certainly don't want to lose another.

During the budget debate, I worked with Senator TALENT on a successful amendment to help the Senate produce a well-funded highway bill and keep all the funding options on the table. This amendment was included in the final budget resolution, and I am pleased to say it helped pave the way for the additional \$11 billion that was added to the Senate bill.

As my colleagues know, this bill isn't just about improving our roads, transit systems, and buses, but it is also about creating jobs. The Department of Transportation estimates that for every \$1 billion of highway spending, we are creating 47,500 new jobs, and this generates more than \$2 billion in economic activity.

Mr. President, we need this bill. Michigan needs this bill. Over the last 4 years, Michigan has lost jobs. The SAFETEA bill will create good-paying jobs and help thousands of Michigan families make ends meet. So it is absolutely critical we pass this bill today.

We are not talking about minimum-wage jobs, we are talking about well-paying jobs that help Michigan families pay their mortgages, save for retirement, and pay for their children's education. The SAFETEA bill will create over 59,000 jobs in Michigan alone.

Mr. President, this delay has also cost Michigan additional highway funding that we desperately need. Our communities are growing, congestion is getting worse, and our roads are worn down through increased wear and tear, but we are still working under funding formulas that are over 7 years old.

In fact, Detroit ranks ninth nationally for having the worst traffic congestion. That is even worse than the delays in Boston and Philadelphia.

The Senate bill would provide Michigan with over \$6.65 billion in highway funding and \$600 million in transit investment to help address our congested roads and increase bus service throughout our State. This also is desperately needed.

We cannot fix these problems without a well-funded highway bill. Unfortunately, the House TEA-LU doesn't provide the resources we need to address our aging roads and transit systems. This also would mean fewer jobs for Michigan and the country.

I also add that the Senate bill continues to move us forward for Michigan to get its fair share. We are not there in terms of dollar for dollar, and I will continue to fight in every Transpor-

tation bill until we get there. But we need to move forward so Michigan gets a better share in this bill and a better opportunity to have the resources and jobs we need.

As this bill goes to conference with the House, I urge my colleagues to stand behind the Senate bill. Once again, this Senate will be passing a bill that is better than what has been passed in the House. It is more fair. I am very hopeful we will stand together on a bipartisan basis and insist that the Senate version ultimately be the version that is passed.

We also need for the bill to be fair and for it to meet the needs of our communities, and we need to make sure we are creating as many jobs as possible. It is time to invest in the best possible resources for our Nation's transportation needs. I am pleased that because of the bipartisan effort in the Senate we will be having a vote today on final passage of this desperately needed bill. Hopefully, we will see it going to the President in a form that is fair for Michigan, for all of our States, and that it is something that will address the future needs of our country.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 3

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the consecutive votes in relation to the pending amendments on the highway bill begin at noon today, with the additional time equally divided as before, and that no second-degree amendments be in order prior to the votes in relation to the pending amendments; provided, that following the first vote, the Senate then stand in recess as under the previous order, with the remaining votes occurring after the recess. I also ask unanimous consent that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided before each of the votes in the stacked series.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 706 WITHDRAWN

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 706 be withdrawn.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that following the first vote, Senator LANDRIEU be recognized for 5 minutes as in morning business prior to the recess.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

ASSEMBLY TO PROMOTE THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN CUBA

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a very important sense-of-the-Senate resolution pending before the Senate. This resolution expresses support for a historic meeting taking place in Havana, Cuba, this Friday, May 20. It is called the Assembly to Promote the Civil Society in Cuba. This resolution expresses support for the courageous individuals who continue to fight for and advance liberty and democracy for the Cuban people.

I thank my colleague from Florida, Senator BILL NELSON, for partnering with me on this important effort. I also thank and commend the 23 other colleagues who have signed on to this bipartisan effort in cosponsoring this resolution.

For too long, the Cuban people have been starved of the precious freedoms so dearly cherished in the United States and in democracies around the world. This year, May 20 provides us with a unique opportunity to highlight and support efforts to advance liberty and democracy in Cuba.

I stress to my colleagues the tremendous valor and bravery of these pro-democracy advocates who are risking their lives pursuing their natural God-given freedoms that they continue to be denied.

Already there have been reports of disappearances, state security intimidation, and of infrastructure interruptions by the regime in order to stop this gathering. For someone to travel from one part of Cuba to another, within their country, citizens must seek the government's permission before doing so. Transportation is made more difficult and the ever-present Committees for the Defense of Revolution, which stand as government watchdogs in every neighborhood and on every street corner, provide even more intimidation and fear to those who seek to attend this gathering.

May 20 has long marked an important day for the Cuban people. It was on this day in 1902 that the island first gained its independence. This is a particularly poignant moment in history, when the United States fought side by side with the Cuban people as they sought to throw off the yoke of colonialism. After 4 years of building a governmental structure and helping the Cuban people to gain its governance, in 1902 the United States ceded independence to the people of Cuba. It was on May 20, 1902, that took place. This is what we currently are looking for, for the Cuban people to be allowed to celebrate. The current Cuban Government prefers to celebrate other dates more in